

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-indicated patent application, as amended, is respectfully requested. The present amendment is responsive to the Non-Final Office Action mailed March 28, 2003. Claims 1-51 had been rejected. Accordingly, various claims have been amended and supporting remarks are presented herewith that particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicant regards as his invention. No new matter has been added.

THE INVENTION

The present invention includes embodiments directed to a method and apparatus for remote monitoring and/or control of an airfield lighting system. A processing system local to the airport is provided in communication with the airfield system, preferably an airfield lighting system, for monitor and control thereof. The airfield lighting system is for producing airfield system information for processing by the local processing system. The local processing system connects to a global communication network such that the airfield lighting system information is accessed from a remote location disposed on the global communication network.

In one embodiment, the present method includes taking action in response to the airfield system information. The step of taking action can include notifying a user with a notification message. The step of taking action can also entail tracking the status of a system, such as airfield approach lighting system, to determine whether operation is satisfactory or whether a fault condition exists.

In another embodiment, the present system provides redundant monitoring and control of the local system, providing an extra measure to insure compliance with the requirements of regulatory agencies, i.e. the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). And of course, it is understood the disclosed system is not limited to airfield lighting systems, but can accommodate any airport systems, including fire alarm systems, security systems, etc. This is very different from the prior art relied on by the Examiner.

THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner had rejected claims 1-3, 7-11, 13-14, 28-30, 34-38 and 40-41 under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woolard et al. (WO 00/17984) in view of Konkright et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,236,332). This grounds of rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly as applied to the amended claims.

Woolard et al. discloses an energy management system for energy users with large physical plants. The system of Woolard et al. is intended to provide such energy users with a comprehensive understanding of their energy consumption, in order to help with managing business decisions. Woolard et al. also discloses providing a single centrally located management system for managing a number of geographically dispersed locations. Woolard et al. also discloses that access to the facilities may be obtained over a communications system, which may be the Internet.

It is noted that Woolard et al. does not teach a system including a local processing system at an airport for monitoring and controlling an airfield lighting system. Woolard et al. also fails to disclose a method or apparatus for indicating whether the status of an

airfield lighting system is satisfactory or whether action should be taken in response thereto. Woolard et al. also fails to disclose such a local system in combination with a redundant control and monitoring system, including a connection to the local processing system via a global communication network such as the Internet. Therefore, there is no way that Woolard et al. can be construed as providing a system with capabilities commensurate with those recited in the amended claims and supported by the present disclosure, particularly as applied to an airfield lighting system.

The Examiner also cites the Conkright et al. reference in combination with Woolard et al. Conkright et al. is brought in apparently for simply showing the remote access of airport lighting information over the Internet. However, it is further noted that Conkright et al. does not disclose a system for simply indicating whether the status of an airfield lighting system is satisfactory or whether action should be taken in response thereto. Conkright et al. also fails to disclose a local processing system at an airport for monitoring and controlling an airfield lighting system, used in combination with a redundant control and monitoring system, which accesses the local processing system via a global communication network such as the Internet.

It is therefore clear that even if the combination of Woolard et al. and Conkright et al. were a proper combination, it would still fail to disclose a system with redundant control and monitoring of an airfield lighting system, as is clearly required by the present independent claims. Reconsideration of this grounds of rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

The Examiner had also rejected claims 19-25, 4, 5, 31-32 and 43-49 under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the base combination of Woolard et al. in view of Conkright et al., further in view of Townsend (WO 01/22177). Claims 6, 12, 33 and 39 are also rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the base combination, further in view of Steen et al. (WO 00/62136). Claims 15-17 and 42 are also rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the base combination, further in view of Runyon et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,969,642). Claim 18 are also rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the base combination, further in view of Norman et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,243,340). Claims 26, 27 and 50-51 are also rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the base combination, further in view of Townsend and Moore (presumably U.S. Pat. No. 5,877,961). These grounds of rejection are also respectfully traversed, particularly as applied to the amended claims.

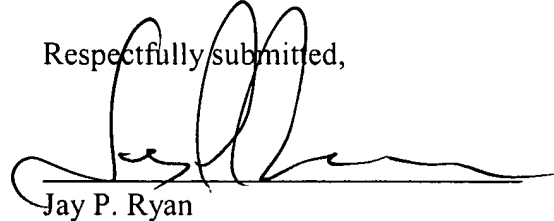
The Examiner brings in the Townsend reference inter alia for disclosing a system of controlling facilities over the Internet using an authorization code. The Steen et al. reference has been applied by the Examiner for disclosing customer access over the Internet and notification via cellphone. The Examiner adds Runyon et al. to the base combination for disclosing transmitting data in an airfield lighting system via wires, fiber optics or wirelessly. Norman et al. is brought in by the Examiner for disclosing the providing of location data to a processor in addition to data related to airport lighting. And the Examiner adds Townsend and Moore to the base combination stating that Moore discloses inter alia a monitoring system over a network of storing information about repair history entered by a technician.

The above-indicated rejections of the various dependent claims are concerned with ancillary details of the present embodiments. It should be considered that the references to Townsend, Steen et al., Runyon et al., Norman et al. and Moore do not supply the deficiencies of the base claims, particularly as presently amended. To wit, none of these references can be relied on to show such a local system in combination with a redundant control and monitoring system, including a connection to the local processing system via a global communication network such as the Internet. Therefore, it is clear that, even if it were proper to further combine these references with the base combination, as proposed by the Examiner, these references would nevertheless fail to shore up the deficiencies of the base combination. Thus, it is clear that none of the various proposed combinations can be construed as providing a system with redundant control and monitoring of an airfield lighting system, as is clearly shown in the present disclosure and recited in the claims as presently amended. Thus, the present dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as the present independent claims. In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims distinguish over the prior art and reconsideration of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing it is respectfully submitted that the present application distinguishes over the prior art, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes there are any further matters, which need to be discussed in order to expedite the prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

If there are any fees necessitated by the foregoing communication, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0902, referencing our Docket No. 74953/11664.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay P. Ryan', is written over a horizontal line.

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